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Side bridge

This exercise is rather simple to perform and has progressions and regressions depending on whether you need to make it harder or easier respectively. The purpose of this exercise is to help improve the endurance of the core musculature, particularly the ones on the side. On top of this, as this exercise is only performed on one side at a time, it can be helpful in balancing up any muscle imbalances that occur as part of our day to day life.

To perform this exercise:

- Lie on your side on the floor with your knees flexed at 90 degrees and your spine straight.
- Before initiating any movement maintain an abdominal brace, remember this is the feeling where it feels as if you are blowing up a balloon.
- You should then drive your hips forward, such that your torso is in a straight line elevated from the floor, supported by your elbow and your knee closest to the ground. (see picture)
- This position should be held for a couple of seconds, and then slowly bend your hips such that you go back down to the floor.

The above steps describe one repetition, and this exercise is best performed aiming for 12-20 repetitions on each side, for a total of three sets. To avoid muscle imbalance ensure you do the same number on each side.

To increase the difficulty of this exercise, you can perform it with your legs straight instead of knees flexed to 90 degrees. This is more difficult due to the increased demand on your core musculature.

To progress even further you can try performing one repetition of a 45 second hold. This will really test the endurance of your muscles, but if you start to feel any uncontrollable shaking at any time, stop there and perform the same number of seconds on the other side.

Clam shell

This exercise is also performed lying on your side. The purpose of this exercise is to help increase the activation of some of the muscles around the hip and pelvis, specifically the gluteus maximus of the buttocks. This muscle becomes inactive through extended sitting and contributes towards hip, pelvis and low back pain when it is inactive.

Instead of having to perch yourself on your elbow, you can lie down on your side in whichever way you are comfortable in, as long as your knees are flexed to 90 degrees and your pelvis is level with your shoulders. See the below photo for guidance if you are struggling with this.



An example of the Clam Stretch



An example of the Side Bridge

To perform this exercise:

- Start by lying on your side with your knees flexed to 90 degrees with your knees and feet together.
- Place your top hand on your buttock so that you can feel the muscle activation.
- Keeping your feet touching, open up your top hip such that your knee is raised in the air. Only go as far as your hip will allow, as otherwise you will start to use the wrong muscles and the exercise will lose its effectiveness. Do not roll backwards.

This exercise is best performed with 10-12 repetitions done for three sets on each side. The beauty of this exercise is that it is very easy to do. The difficulty in it is concentrating and really trying to feel the buttock muscle activating.

If you have any queries or concerns, feel free to contact your chiropractor at the clinic on [01323 722 499](tel:01323722499).

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